WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An information processing apparatus comprising:

storage means for storing data;

electronic watermarking means for applying an electronic watermark to said data stored in said storage means;

instruction means for instructing said electronic watermark means to employ a timing for applying an electronic watermark to said data; and

setting means for arbitrarily setting said timing for each data set stored in said storage means.

2. An information processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

communication means for transmitting said data stored in said storage means,

wherein said setting means is capable of arbitrarily setting at least a timing for transmitting said data from said communication means, and a timing for storing said data in said storage means.

3. An information processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

output means for outputting said data from said storage means;

wherein said setting means is capable of

arbitrarily setting at least a timing for outputting said data from said output means, and a timing for storing said data in said storage means.

4. An information processing apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said output means outputs data after an electronic watermark has been removed from said data.

5. An information processing apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising:

display means for providing a display based on said data output by said output means,

wherein said display means displays said data while an electronic watermark is applied for said data, and

wherein said output means outputs data after an electronic watermark has been removed from said data.

6. An information processing apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said output means outputs said data by using an output device that is capable of communicating with said information processing apparatus.

7. An information processing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said output means employs said

output device to remove an electronic watermark from data and to output the resultant data.

8. An information processing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein, when the output of said data is completed, said output device deletes data received from said information processing apparatus.

9. An information processing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein, during the data output process, said output device does not halt said data output process even upon receiving of a halting instruction.

10. An information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said electronic watermarking means is capable of using a plurality of methods to apply an electronic watermark, and

wherein said setting means is capable of designating an electronic watermarking method for said data.

11. An information processing apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said plurality of electronic watermarking methods include at the least a first method for employing an electronic watermark as visible information, and a second method for employing an electronic watermark as invisible information.

12. An information processing apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said plurality of electronic watermarking methods include at the least a third method for employing an electronic watermark as removable information, and a fourth method for employing an electronic watermark as unremovable information.

13. An information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said setting means is capable of designating watermark information that is to be applied to said data by said electronic watermarking means, and

wherein said electronic watermarking means applies, to said data, said watermark information designated by said setting means.

14. An information processing apparatus according to claim 13, further comprising:

management means for managing said watermark information designated by said setting means,

wherein said electronic watermarking means is capable of employing a plurality of electronic watermarking methods, and

wherein said management means employs a common form to manage said watermark information, regardless of whether said watermark information has a different form.

15. A communication network comprising:

an information processing apparatus for applying an electronic watermark for data; and

an output device for outputting data,

said information processing apparatus including

storage means for storing data,

electronic watermarking means for applying an electronic watermark to said data stored in said storage means,

instruction means for instructing said electronic watermark means to employ a timing for applying an electronic watermark to said data, and

setting means for arbitrarily setting said timing for each data set stored in said storage means.

16. A communication network according to claim 15, further comprising:

communication means for transmitting to said output device said data stored in said storage means,

wherein said setting means is capable of arbitrarily setting at least a timing for transmitting said data from said communication means, and a timing for storing said data in said storage means.

17. A communication network according to claim 15, wherein said setting means is capable of arbitrarily setting at least a timing for outputting

said data from said output device, and a timing for storing said data in said storage means.

18. A communication network according to claim 15, wherein said output device outputs data after an electronic watermark has been removed from said data.

19. A communication network according to claim 15, further comprising:

a display device for providing a display based on said data output by said output device,

wherein said display device displays said data while an electronic watermark is applied for said data, and

wherein said output device outputs data after an electronic watermark has been removed from said data.

20. A communication network according to claim 15, wherein, when the output of said data is completed, said output device deletes data received from said information processing apparatus.

21. A communication network according to claim 15, wherein, during the data output process, said output device does not halt said data output process even upon receiving of a halting instruction.

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22. A communication network according to claim 15, wherein said electronic watermarking means is capable of using a plurality of methods to apply an electronic watermark, and

wherein said setting means is capable of designating an electronic watermarking method for said data.

23. A communication network according to claim 22, wherein said plurality of electronic watermarking methods include at the least a first method for employing an electronic watermark as visible information, and a second method for employing an electronic watermark as invisible information.

24. A communication network according to claim 22, wherein said plurality of electronic watermarking methods include at the least a third method for employing an electronic watermark as removable information, and a fourth method for employing an electronic watermark as unremovable information.

25. A communication network according to claim 15, wherein said setting means is capable of designating watermark information that is to be applied to said data by said electronic watermarking means, and

wherein said electronic watermarking means

applies, to said data, said watermark information designated by said setting means.

26. A communication network according to claim 25, further comprising:

management means for managing said watermark information designated by said setting means,

wherein said electronic watermarking means is capable of employing a plurality of electronic watermarking methods, and

wherein said management means employs a common form to manage said watermark information, regardless of whether said watermark information has a different form.

27. A control method for an information processing apparatus comprising:

a storage step of storing data;

an electronic watermarking step of applying an electronic watermark to said data stored at said storage step;

an instruction step of instructing said electronic watermark means to employ a timing for applying an electronic watermark to said data; and

a setting step of arbitrarily setting said timing for each data set stored at said storage step.

28. A control method according to claim 27, further comprising:

a communication step of transmitting said data stored at said storage step,

wherein at said setting step, at least a timing for transmitting said data at said communication step, and a timing for storing said data at said storage step are capable of being arbitrarily set.

29. A control method according to claim 27, further comprising:

an output step of outputting said data at said storage step,

wherein at said setting step, at least a timing for outputting said data at said output step, and a timing for storing said data at said storage step are capable of being arbitrarily set.

30. A control method according to claim 29, wherein at said output step, data are output after an electronic watermark has been removed from said data.

31. A control method according to claim 30, further comprising:

a display step of providing a display based on said data output at said output step,

wherein at said display step, said data are

displayed while an electronic watermark is applied for said data, and

wherein at said output step, data are output after an electronic watermark has been removed from said data.

32. A control method according to claim 29, wherein at said output step, said data are output by using an output device that is capable of communicating with said information processing apparatus.

33. A control method according to claim 32, wherein at said output step, said output device is employed to remove an electronic watermark from data and to output the resultant data.

34. A control method according to claim 32, wherein, when the output of said data is completed, said output device deletes data received from said information processing apparatus.

35. A control method according to claim 32, wherein, during the data output process, said output device does not halt said data output process even upon receiving of a halting instruction.

36. A control method according to claim 27,

wherein at said electronic watermarking step, a plurality of methods are available to apply an electronic watermark, and

wherein at said setting step, an electronic watermarking method for said data is capable of being designated.

37. A control method according to claim 36, wherein said plurality of electronic watermarking methods include at the least a first method for employing an electronic watermark as visible information, and a second method for employing an electronic watermark as invisible information.

38. A control method according to claim 36, wherein said plurality of electronic watermarking methods include at the least a third method for employing an electronic watermark as removable information, and a fourth method for employing an electronic watermark as unremovable information.

39. A control method according to claim 27, wherein at said setting step, watermark information that is to be applied to said data at said electronic watermarking step is capable of being designated, and

wherein at said electronic watermarking step, said watermark information designated at said setting step

is applied to said data.

40. A control method according to claim 39, further comprising:

a management step of managing said watermark information designated at said setting step,

wherein at said electronic watermarking step, a plurality of electronic watermarking methods are available, and

wherein at said management step, a common form is employed to manage said watermark information, regardless of whether said watermark information has a different form.

41. A control method for a communication network, which includes an information processing apparatus which is capable of applying an electronic watermark for data and an output device that is capable of outputting data, said control method comprising:

a storage step of storing data;

an electronic watermarking step of applying an electronic watermark to said data stored at said storage step;

an instruction step of instructing said electronic watermark means to employ a timing for applying an electronic watermark to said data; and

a setting step of arbitrarily setting said timing

~~for each data set stored at said storage step.~~

42. A control method according to claim 41, further comprising:

a communication step of transmitting, to said output device, said data stored at said storage step,

wherein at said setting step, at least a timing for transmitting said data at said communication step, and a timing for storing said data at said storage step are capable of being arbitrarily set.

43. A control method according to claim 41, wherein at said setting step, at least a timing for outputting said data from said output device, and a timing for storing said data at said storage step are capable of being arbitrarily set.

44. A control method according to claim 41, wherein said output device outputs data after an electronic watermark has been removed from said data.

45. A control method according to claim 41, wherein said communication network further comprises: a display device for providing a display based on said data output by said output device,

wherein said display device displays said data while an electronic watermark is applied for said data,

and

wherein said output device outputs data after an electronic watermark has been removed from said data.

46. A control method according to claim 41, wherein, when the output of said data is completed, said output device deletes data received from said information processing apparatus.

47. A control method according to claim 41, wherein, during the data output process, said output device does not halt said data output process even upon receiving of a halting instruction.

48. A control method according to claim 41, wherein at said electronic watermarking step, a plurality of methods are available to apply an electronic watermark, and

wherein at said setting step, an electronic watermarking method for said data is capable of being designated.

49. A control method according to claim 48, wherein said plurality of electronic watermarking methods include at the least a first method for employing an electronic watermark as visible information, and a second method for employing an

electronic watermark as invisible information.

50. A control method according to claim 48, wherein said plurality of electronic watermarking methods include at the least a third method for employing an electronic watermark as removable information, and a fourth method for employing an electronic watermark as unremovable information.

51. A control method according to claim 41, wherein at said setting step, watermark information that is to be applied to said data at said electronic watermarking step is capable of being designated, and

wherein at said electronic watermarking step, said watermark information designated at said setting step is applied to said data.

52. A control method according to claim 51, further comprising:

a management step of managing said watermark information designated at said setting step,

wherein at said electronic watermarking step, a plurality of electronic watermarking methods are available, and

wherein at said management step, a common form is employed to manage said watermark information, regardless of whether said watermark information has a

different form.

53. A storage medium on which a computer-readable control program is stored to control an information processing apparatus, said control program comprising:

a storage step of storing data;

an electronic watermarking step of applying an electronic watermark to said data stored at said storage step;

an instruction step of instructing said electronic watermark means to employ a timing for applying an electronic watermark to said data; and

a setting step of arbitrarily setting said timing for each data set stored at said storage step.

54. A storage medium according to claim 53, wherein said control program further comprises a communication step of transmitting said data stored at said storage step, and

wherein at said setting step, at least a timing for transmitting said data at said communication step, and a timing for storing said data at said storage step are capable of being arbitrarily set.

55. A storage medium according to claim 53, wherein said control program further comprises an output step of outputting said data at said storage

step, and

wherein at said setting step, at least a timing for outputting said data at said output step, and a timing for storing said data at said storage step are capable of being arbitrarily set.

56. A storage medium according to claim 55, wherein at said output step, data are output after an electronic watermark has been removed from said data.

57. A storage medium according to claim 56, wherein said control program further comprises a display step of providing a display based on said data output at said output step,

wherein at said display step, said data are displayed while an electronic watermark is applied for said data, and

wherein at said output step, data are output after an electronic watermark has been removed from said data.

58. A storage medium according to claim 55, wherein at said output step, said data are output by using an output device that is capable of communicating with said information processing apparatus.

59. A storage medium according to claim 55,

wherein at said output step, said output device is employed to remove an electronic watermark from data and to output the resultant data.

60. A storage medium according to claim 53, wherein at said electronic watermarking step, a plurality of methods are available to apply an electronic watermark, and

wherein at said setting step, an electronic watermarking method for said data is capable of being designated.

61. A storage medium according to claim 60, wherein said plurality of electronic watermarking methods include at the least a first method for employing an electronic watermark as visible information, and a second method for employing an electronic watermark as invisible information.

62. A storage medium according to claim 60, wherein said plurality of electronic watermarking methods include at the least a third method for employing an electronic watermark as removable information, and a fourth method for employing an electronic watermark as unremovable information.

63. A storage medium according to claim 53,

wherein at said setting step, watermark information that is to be applied to said data at said electronic watermarking step is capable of being designated, and

wherein at said electronic watermarking step, said watermark information designated at said setting step is applied to said data.

64. A storage medium according to claim 63, wherein said control program further comprises a management step of managing said watermark information designated at said setting step,

wherein at said electronic watermarking step, a plurality of electronic watermarking methods are available, and

wherein at said management step, a common form is employed to manage said watermark information, regardless of whether said watermark information has a different form.